

VZCZCXR07528
PP RUEHMA RUEHPA RUEHTRO
DE RUEHNK #0710 3381443

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

P 031443Z DEC 08

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7894

INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNMGH/MAGHREB COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY 0290

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0344

RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0672

RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 1887

RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0368

RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY

RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0410

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0785

UNCLAS NOUAKCHOTT 000710

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL KPAO KDEM MR

SUBJECT: NATIONAL DAY MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BUSH GARNERS

LOCAL PRESS ATTENTION

REF: STATE 125129

¶11. (U) Charge hand-delivered message from President Bush to President Abdallahi (Reftel) on November 30 to FNDD co-leader in charge of Foreign Affairs Mohamed Ould Maouloud. Local media picked up the story December 1, resulting in several calls to the PAO section asking for confirmation that the message was genuine. Press coverage of the message was limited to short articles that only presented the facts, with no additional commentary. However, a broad cross-section of the media covered the message: both pro-coup and anti-coup, and French-language and Arabic-language newspapers and websites devoted space to it.

¶12. (SBU) Comment: Anti-coup groups undoubtedly welcomed the letter as a continuing sign of strong USG commitment to the Mauritanian constitution. Press interest in the message indicates that any kind of official high-level communication from the USG to GIRM has the power to create a stir in the local media. The FNDD did not release the actual text of the short letter from the President. End comment.

HANKINS